

Remarks Honoring the 2012 Stanley Cup Champion Los Angeles Kings and the 2012 Major League Soccer Champion Los Angeles Galaxy
March 26, 2013

The President. Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House. And welcome back to the back-to-back MLS champion, the LA Galaxy. I was telling these guys, they're starting to get a little comfortable around here, because they just keep on coming back. But this time, they brought some company: the Stanley Cup champion, LA Kings.

Now, it is great to have both teams here, not just because they share a hometown. I'm a little resentful, coming from Chicago, that L.A. seems to be getting all these championships. But they don't just share a hometown, they also share a pretty good comeback story.

When it comes to the Galaxy, a team with Landon Donovan on it is rarely the underdog. But when the Galaxy was here last year, their chances of repeating as champions didn't look all that good. The injury bug plagued the team. It seemed like it might be a rebuilding year. But right after that visit, they turned things around. And you can call it a coincidence, but I just want to point out that right after they visited with me, the Galaxy built the best record in the league. [*Laughter*]

In the MLS Cup Final, the Galaxy trailed at halftime, and it stayed that way until Omar Gonzalez, who is with the National Team today, scored the equalizer in the 60th minute. A few minutes after that, Landon did what he does best and scored the go-ahead goal. And pretty soon, they were up 3 to 1. And then midfielder Juninho was probably dancing the samba—[*laughter*—the MLS Cup belonged to LA for the second-straight year, and that was the fourth in Galaxy history.

Now, the Kings' story is a little bit different. These guys were not defending champions. In fact, before last year, LA had never won the Stanley Cup. And after switching head coaches midseason—a coach, I should add, who got good training from the Chicago Blackhawks—[*laughter*—squeaking into the playoffs as a number-eight seed, it looked like the streak of not winning was going to continue. No eight seed had ever won a championship in any of our professional sports.

But something happened during the playoffs: Timing is everything. And as center Jarret Stoll says, "We all came together at the right time, and we all peaked at the right time." With playoff MVP Jonathan Quick playing lights out in goal, these guys just kept winning game after game after game. And eventually, the rest of the league started to take notice.

Captain Dustin Brown put it best before the final game. He said, "I don't know what 45 years of energy sounds like, but if we play our game, maybe we'll find out." And that night at the STAPLES Center, they found out. And America found out that Southern California actually has some pretty intense hockey fans.

So I'm going to be a good sport: These guys pointed out that they beat my Blackhawks last night. I will also say that, given this season, how rare it is to beat the Blackhawks, I want to congratulate them for that as well. [*Laughter*]

We also found out that both these teams are full of some pretty stand-up players and coaches. They're out in the community year round. They're changing lives, they're making a

difference. As Coach Arena of the Galaxy says: "The soccer is very much secondary. If we can have an impact on the lives of young kids, we want to be a part of that."

And that's something we all appreciate, especially those of us who are parents. And we are thrilled that you guys are sticking around to host a "Let's Move!" question-and-answer session with kids from all across the country.

So I want to give a hearty congratulations to both the Kings and the Galaxy one more time for bringing two championships to L.A. and for doing so much for your fans back in California.

And we also know that there are a couple of Galaxy players who couldn't be here because of World Cup qualifying, so I want to wish Team USA the very best of luck as they take on Mexico tonight. I hope both these teams have a great rest of the season.

So everybody give them a big round of applause. Congratulations. Congratulations.

All right, we got some—are we going to do the jerseys at the podium? All right, so Landon, what do we got here?

LA Galaxy Forward Landon Donovan. We have a ball for you, and then we've got a——

[At this point, the President tossed the soccer ball upward, bounced it off his forehead, and caught it.]

Mr. Donovan. That was pretty good. *[Laughter]* And then, we've got a jersey for you.

The President. I hope you guys caught that. That doesn't happen very often. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Donovan. And a jersey.

The President. That is a nice-looking jersey. All right, let's—thank you.

So am I going to stand over here? Okay. And what do we got here?

LA Kings Right Wing Dustin Brown. Just a jersey here.

The President. That's a good-looking jersey. Forty-four, it's a lucky number. All right, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Omar Gonzalez, defender, Juninho Pernambucano, midfielder, and Bruce Arena, head coach, Los Angeles Galaxy; and Terry Murray, former head coach, Darryl Sutter, head coach, Jarret Stoll, center, and Jonathan Quick, goaltender, Los Angeles Kings.

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